

SURVEYS WEST OF ONE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

TRANSMITTING

A statement in regard to the total amount expended in the prosecution of surveys west of the one hundredth meridian.

FEBRUARY 28, 1879.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, February 24, 1879.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of the Committee on Appropriations, a communication received from the Acting Chief of Engineers, submitting statement in regard to the total amount expended in the prosecution of military and geographical surveys west of the one hundredth meridian now being carried on by this department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS WEST ONE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN,
Washington, D. C., February 20, 1879.

SIR: I have the honor to invite the attention of the department to the following remarks of the Hon. J. D. C. Atkins, chairman of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, made while the legislative appropriation bill was under consideration in the Committee of the Whole House, in order that any erroneous impressions that might be derived therefrom shall be corrected.

The following appears as a portion of his remarks in the Record or the 11th instant, page 31:

United States surveys and explorations west of the one hundredth meridian,
Lieut. George M. Wheeler in charge, 1869-'79..... \$549,316
General Humphreys does not report the salaries of officers, soldiers, and detailed men from other departments, and other sources of expenditures. If these were included, it doubtless would raise the amount to over \$1,500,000.

Referring to House Ex. Doc. 88, Forty-fifth Congress, second session,

it appears that the One hundredth Meridian survey had expended, up to March 8, 1878, as follows:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| From Engineer appropriations | \$368,770 55 |
| Aid and supplies from Quartermaster's Department | 121,348 00 |
| Aid and supplies from Commissary of Subsistence | 5,135 54 |
| Aid and supplies from Ordnance Department | 4,062 63 |
| Total to that date | 499,316 72 |
| Amount appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1879 | 50,000 00 |
| Total | 549,316 72 |
| Salaries of officers since commencement, to include February 14, 1879... | 66,828 13 |
| Total | 616,144 85 |
| Amount stated by Mr. Atkins | 1,500,000 00 |
| Difference | 883,855 15 |

The officers performing professional services, their salaries are properly chargeable to the total cost of the survey. The "soldiers" are paid the same, whether detailed as escorts upon this work or not, nor are they diverted, except temporarily, from their usual field of duty; and they do not add to the aggregate of results, but on the contrary, by the necessity of their presence, prove that the labors are conducted in the face of more than ordinary obstacles. Their expense has not, therefore, been considered properly chargeable to the work.

No men have been detailed from "other departments."

It is not known by "other sources of expenditure" to what allusion is made.

Farther on in his remarks upon the subject of surveys Mr. Atkins states as follows (see Record of the 19th instant, page 85):

And we appropriated, I believe it was, \$100,000 for the Wheeler survey, besides the transportation that is furnished to Lieutenant Wheeler by the War Department, which amounts to as much more.

The amount actually appropriated and as shown above, for the year ending June 30, 1879, was \$50,000, instead of \$100,000. While it is impossible to furnish the exact amount paid for transportation since March 8, 1878, as the field accounts are not yet all at hand, still the approximate amount paid by the Quartermaster's Department for this purpose, to include January 31, 1879, is not to exceed \$24,000.

Instead of \$200,000 for the year in question, as would be inferred, the summation of the appropriation and cost of transportation is not to exceed \$74,000.

I have the honor to request that the information contained in this statement may be forwarded.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. M. WHEELER,

First Lieutenant, Corps of Engineers, in charge.

Col. H. G. WRIGHT,

Acting Chief of Engineers, U. S. A.

[First indorsement.]

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,

Washington, February 20, 1879.

Respectfully submitted to the honorable the Secretary of War.

H. G. WRIGHT,

Acting Chief of Engineers.